

Minutes of January 9, 2012

The Meeting was opened at 5:30 PM; all members were present.

The meeting minutes of December 19th were waived.

The Board met with Fire Chief, Peter Scala, to discuss and review the proposed five year plan. Chief Scala is recommending a new truck to replace engine #1 be placed on the May Annual Town warrant, since Engine 1 is 21 years old and the most used & expensive truck the department has. The current Engine would be sold and could return between \$20,000 and \$30,000 back to the Town. The Board inquired about the proposal of an addition to the Fire House to make an office for the Police Department. The Fire Department is requesting \$12,000.00 a year for rent to assist with the cost of building the new building which would cost between \$250,000 and \$300,000. The new building would have 2 bays and be attached to the new firehouse. One bay would be for the ambulance and one for the police cruiser as well as office space for the Police Department. The current old building would be razed to make room for the new building. Chief Scala stated that all utilities would be included under the Fire Department's budget. The Board discussed a long term lease with the Fire Department since it is the owner of the building, not the Town. Chief Scala stated that this could be done. The Chair inquired about the replacement of radios that was discussed last year (approximately \$30,000 total). Chief Scala stated that he has submitted a grant and, if received, it would cover the cost of radios for the whole department.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to appoint Neil Blackwell, Bridget Hughes, Teena Parton, Owen Hoberman, Joyce Sachs, Mr. Peter Marks and Mr. Scott Farrell to the Ladder Sign Committee.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to recess until 6:30 p.m.

The meeting was reopened at 6:30 p.m.

James Mullen, Chairman of the Planning Board, appeared before the Board to receive approval for a District Local Technical Assistant Grant. Chairman Mullen advised that this grant is funded through the State and there is no cost to the Town. With this grant the Planning Board will be working with Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to finish village districting and overlays. A motion was made, seconded and so voted to approve that the Chair sign the application for a District Local Technical Assistant Grant.

The Chair read a statement regarding the issue of closing community schools. Ms. White advised that the Board had been given the first draft FY2013 budget and also information on the

closing of the outlying schools on January 4th. Since that time, the Board hasn't met and it ~~has~~ ~~not~~ has not had any discussions on the issue. She did tell the audience the Board had asked the school administration to level fund the budget. She advised that it appears that the response is they can level fund the budget with the closing of the three community schools. A number of concerned parents were in attendance and expressed concerns and had questions on the closing of the community schools. The Board advised that at this time it does not have sufficient information to answer all of their questions but that public hearings are scheduled in the Towns of Egremont, Monterey, New Marlborough and Sheffield in the upcoming weeks and encouraged everyone to attend and ask their questions regarding the closings. Selectman Yohalem mentioned that it will take 7 out of the 10 School Committee members (a super majority per the Regional School Agreement) to approve the closing of any community schools and to place it on the Annual Town Meeting Warrants of the 5 district towns.

The Board reviewed and discussed the issue of back taxes owed by Willow Creek, LLP and the failure to follow the payment agreement as previously agreed to. A motion was made, seconded and so voted to notify Bradford Wagstaff that a hearing would be held on January 26, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. to hear the matter.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept the minutes of the December 19th meeting as amended.

Being that there was no further business to be brought before the Board a motion was made, seconded and so voted to adjourn at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Skorput
Administrative Assistant